

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Strategic Plan For Fiscal Years 2008-2013



INTRODUCTION

The 2008-2013 Strategic Plan outlines the County of San Diego's priorities for the next five years, and provides information on what the County will do between 2008 and 2013 to address those priorities. It serves as our "road map," identifying where we are today, where we want to be in five years and the route we will use to get there.

The development of a Strategic Plan and its annual review is the first element of the County's General Management System (GMS), which is used to manage all County operations. In the GMS, the County sets forth its Mission and its Guiding Principles, which provide the context for all strategic planning and goal-setting decisions. Our Mission states the purpose of County government and continues to reflect our commitment to anticipating, understanding and responding to the critical issues affecting San Diego County residents. The County of San Diego's Mission is:

"To provide the residents of San Diego County with superior County services in terms of quality, timeliness and value in order to improve the region's quality of life."

The County's Guiding Principles identify the organization's core values, articulating the County's ethical obligations to County residents and the basic standards we strive to uphold. Our Guiding Principles are:

- ❖ **Provide for the safety and well-being of those San Diego communities, families, individuals and other organizations we serve;**
- ❖ **Preserve and enhance the environment in San Diego County;**
- ❖ **Ensure the County's fiscal stability through periods of economic fluctuations and changing priorities and service demands; and**
- ❖ **Promote a culture that values our customers, employees and partners and institutionalizes continuous improvement and innovation.**

The County's Strategic Plan explains how the County will fulfill its Mission and uphold its Guiding Principles during the next five years. It clearly identifies the organization's priorities, so that both the public and employees can better understand how the County will use its resources during the next five years and what to expect as a result. The goals outlined in the Strategic Plan will be used to guide the allocation and budgeting of resources in the County's Operational Plan, ensuring that County resources are spent to achieve the organization's highest priorities. And, consistent with the County General Management System, activities undertaken to achieve our goals will be tracked and reported throughout the year, to ensure accountability and the achievement of positive results.

It is important to note that the Strategic Plan is composed of two parts: the Strategic Initiatives, which address our external priorities, and the Required Disciplines, which address our organization's internal priorities. Strategic Initiatives focus on what we will do to serve the public -- which is, of course, the reason counties and other government agencies exist. Since they address public needs, Strategic Initiatives may change over time as public needs, desires and priorities change. Required Disciplines, on the other hand, are the foundation we must establish to accomplish our public service goals efficiently and effectively. Our Required Disciplines set the standards for the continued operational excellence we are committed to achieving.

For 2008-13, our Strategic Initiatives remain:

Kids – “Improve opportunities for children”

The Environment – “Manage resources to ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development”

Safe and Livable Communities – “Promote safe and livable communities”

The Required Disciplines include:

- **Fiscal Stability**
- **Customer Satisfaction**
- **Regional Leadership**
- **Skilled, Competent and Diverse Workforce**
- **Essential Infrastructure**
- **Accountability/Transparency**
- **Continuous Improvement**
- **Information Technology**

The following summary discusses each of the three Strategic Initiatives and their objectives, followed by a discussion of the Required Disciplines. Achieving our Strategic Initiatives and maintaining operational excellence allows us to realize our vision:

“A County government that has earned the respect and support of its residents”

INITIATIVES

Initiative: Kids

“Improve opportunities for children”

Initiative Objectives

1. Encourage behaviors that address children’s health or safety issues to help ensure healthy adulthood.
2. Provide quality care, representation and supportive services for at-risk children to enable and encourage them to succeed.
3. Promote and support family self-sufficiency.
4. Engage youth and their families in enriching activities to help children reach their full potential.

Discussion

The County of San Diego is committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for children. Our vision is for children to be healthy, to be raised in strong families and to reach their full potential.

Making Sure Children Are Healthy

The County provides a broad range of programs and services to ensure children are healthy and safe, including physical and behavioral health care, recreational facilities and activities, and a number of accident and injury prevention programs. The County provides prenatal services to expectant mothers in order to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality rates. Working with community and health providers, the County promotes good health for infants and young children through well-child health exams and injury prevention

efforts. Children can receive their immunizations through regional public health centers, which help prevent the spread of communicable disease. Special treatment services for disabled and chronically-ill children are available to ensure that these vulnerable children can be as healthy and active as possible. Additionally, working with schools and other agencies, the County promotes safety and injury prevention by offering programs such as swimming pool inspection, dog bite and animal safety education and traffic safety in school zones.

Because many childhood health and behavior problems can have life-long consequences, the County works in partnership with families and others to provide comprehensive, community-based mental health, alcohol and drug treatment services. Through a growing number of schools, the County offers early intervention services to address mental health conditions. For children who are seriously emotionally disturbed, a variety of services are coordinated through a collaborative approach in order to prevent the need for out-of-home placement for these children. The County provides a wide range of residential and non-residential alcohol and drug treatment services to youth, including those youth involved in the criminal justice system. By integrating substance abuse and mental health services, the County is striving to improve the quality of treatment for many youth who have both illnesses.

Two critical problems facing children today are childhood obesity and inadequate access to healthcare. The number of overweight and obese children has increased dramatically in the last two decades. In the 2005-06 school year, only 70% of children in Grades 5, 7 and 9 met the Healthy Fitness Zone Standard for body composition in the California Physical Fitness Test. Overweight young people are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults. They are more at risk for associated adult health problems, including heart disease and Type 2 Diabetes. Promoting healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can help reduce the risk of children becoming overweight and developing related health problems.

Health insurance affects access to health care, as well as the financial well-being of families. About 7% of families in San Diego report that at least one child in the household lacks health insurance coverage. Aggressive outreach efforts by the County and community partners has helped increase enrollment of needy children in public health insurance programs like Medi-Cal and Healthy Families. This is vitally important because, with health insurance coverage, children are more likely to receive preventative and acute health care services, making early detection of illnesses and treatment possible.

Making Sure Children Are Raised in Strong Families

The County recognizes that helping families is an effective way to make sure children are safe and secure. For this reason, the County provides a wide array of information and support services for families, often in partnership with school districts and community providers.

Some children and youth, however, require the attention of our juvenile court and child protective systems. The County provides quality care, representation, and supportive services for these at-risk children. For children in the foster care system, the County focuses on ways to help them become productive, self-sufficient adults. This includes improving the quality of placements, and whenever possible, ensuring that foster children are placed in homes within their own communities. Some foster children will have a greater chance to succeed through unique opportunities like the San Pasqual Academy, an innovative residential education facility that offers foster youth a caring home where they can learn academic, social and life skills.

Poverty is another problem affecting children, which is why the County promotes and supports family self-sufficiency. The County helps children by helping families transition from welfare-to-work, linking them to jobs, ensuring payment of court-ordered child support and providing support services, such as training opportunities, housing assistance and public transportation. The County also provides information and support services aimed at increasing families' financial literacy so families can learn to better manage their money and increase their prospects for providing a better quality of life for their children.

Helping Children Reach Their Full Potential

Children who succeed in school are better equipped to succeed in life. Engaging youth and their families in enriching activities helps children reach their full potential. Since school violence affects children's ability to learn by interfering with their sense of security, the County has partnered with schools and communities to focus on youth violence prevention. Internships and mentoring opportunities with seniors are other ways the County helps foster youth and other at-risk youth learn the skills and behaviors to succeed.

Hours before the school day begins and after it ends – hours when parents are often at work – are critical to childhood development. The County will continue to support programs like Critical Hours to focus on enhanced learning through homework assistance, and developing healthy behaviors through positive recreational activities. After-school literacy and recreation programs in our County libraries and parks system provide San Diego youth with experiences that better equip them for adulthood. For kids in the juvenile system, the County offers innovative juvenile diversion programs and support services to foster healthy behaviors and choices to help prevent these youth from entering or re-entering the juvenile justice system.

To prepare children for the challenges and opportunities of information technology, the County will continue to work to narrow the digital divide, and ensure access to information through our libraries and innovative projects to bring the Internet to County residents and communities without access.

Initiative: The Environment

“Manage resources to ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development”

Initiative Objectives

1. Develop and implement resource conservation programs.
2. Develop and implement land use strategies to balance the housing, open space preservation, parks and recreation, infrastructure and economic development needs of County residents, taxpayers and businesses.
3. Protect, sustain and restore the quality of water, air and habitat in the County.
4. Reduce environmental risk through education, outreach, regulation, intergovernmental collaboration and leveraging public and private resources.

Discussion

How we use our natural resources dramatically affects our environment, our quality of life and our economic prosperity. Environmental preservation is imperative – we must ensure a livable environment, helping to sustain and enhance the land, water, air and biodiversity upon which all life depends. At the same time, we must recognize that our population is growing rapidly. Sustaining our quality of life and economic vitality demands we balance our responsibility to preserve environmental resources with our obligation to meet San Diego County's growth needs.

Safeguarding Our Environment and Quality of Life

The County acknowledges a need to preserve open space, which provides recreation opportunities and raw materials, shelters wildlife, and naturally purifies air and water. Resource conservation not only includes habitat conservation, but also water, air and energy conservation.

We continue to support the most ambitious habitat conservation plan ever undertaken in the United States – the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Part of what makes the MSCP so ambitious is that it's designed to anticipate and accommodate growth while protecting the County's wide array of natural resources.

The MSCP is not just good for the environment. It also balances preservation imperatives with our commitment to housing and economic development needs.

Applying the same balanced philosophy, we recognize that mandate alone is not the way to achieve clean water. Effective strategies must be based on education and cooperation, enabling County residents to become partners in efforts to ensure clean water. Through Project Clean Water, the County has brought together the stakeholders, resources and information necessary to create consensus with shared goals and responsibilities for water quality management in the region. The health of our watersheds is a clear indicator of the overall health of our environment. To ensure the health and safety of visitors and residents at our local beaches, the County coordinates the sampling of affected recreational waters following sewage spills. Our region's cities and wastewater agencies also conduct routine monitoring of recreational waters in conjunction with the County. The resulting citizen alerts and advisories provide residents and visitors with important information on a daily basis, which allows them to fully enjoy our region's natural resources.

We know that clean air is not just a matter of standards and statistics – it's about the health and quality of life of our region's growing population. The County continues to make progress toward the achievement of federal and State health-based air quality standards. In the last nine years, the number of days during which ozone levels have exceeded the federal 8-hour standard has been reduced by more than 60%. Effective emission control programs have had a direct influence on this reduction and must be continued.

Encouraging Responsible Development

While the County acts to protect environmental resources and biodiversity, we also have a responsibility to meet the quality of life needs of our rapidly growing population. Reconciling these competing interests requires innovative growth solutions addressing a full spectrum of issues, including housing, transportation, community infrastructure and environmental impact. The County must encourage and enable responsible development addressing both growth and environmental needs. We will continue to lead development of solutions to our region's pressing growth issues and will promote constructive cooperation between development and environmental concerns.

Environmental Education and Outreach

The County not only provides and regulates services, we also educate. Since environmental regulation can only go so far, we make it a point to disseminate information through events, publications and community partnerships to educate residents, businesses and especially children, on what they can do as individuals to preserve and protect our natural environment. Examples of topics that County staff address at community forums, business workshops and school classrooms include recycling, water quality, safe garden products and fuel-savings tips, among others.

Initiative: Safe and Livable Communities

“Promote Safe and Livable Communities”

Initiative Objectives

1. Improve emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation capabilities for both natural and man-made disasters.
2. Improve the safety of our communities by providing a wide range of crime prevention and intervention services, quality investigations, responsive law enforcement and legal representation, as well as detention and supervision services.
3. Promote the health, well being and self sufficiency of adults and seniors.
4. Develop and support services, programs and initiatives that enrich or protect our residents' quality of life.

Discussion

Basic safety and security issues are important. Making sure our neighborhoods are safe places to live, work and play is essential, but promoting livable communities requires much more than just safety. Livable communities are those that have the environment and the amenities necessary for people to prosper and maintain a shared sense of civic pride. We must focus our resources and partner with County residents to develop and maintain a quality of life that is worth protecting. In short, there must be a balance between preparation for risk and uncertainty, and investment to improve our day-to-day lives. County services will continue to support this balance.

Strengthening Regional Security

In the wake of both 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and the 2003 and 2007 wildfires, emergency preparedness issues have taken on a new and more urgent dimension. The County is committed to addressing residents' heightened concern regarding personal safety and regional security, particularly with regard to natural disasters and the threat of terror attacks. This commitment includes exercising regional leadership in response preparedness, information sharing, inter-agency cooperation and coordination of law enforcement, fire fighting, life safety and medical professionals.

Enhancing Crime Prevention

In addition to our work to prevent and prepare for a natural disaster or terrorist attack, the County will continue to strengthen on-going crime prevention efforts. Vital to these efforts are partnerships with schools, cities and community-based organizations. To better ensure public safety, we will continue and expand innovative strategies, such as literacy intervention programs, community oriented policing programs, juvenile truancy prevention, school violence prevention and multi-agency response to substance abuse. We will also continue efforts to stop domestic violence, which remains a major problem with devastating impacts on victims and families, even as overall crime rates decline. Enhanced efforts will focus on preventing violence and children's exposure to violence, supporting victims, and reducing reoccurrence through programs that address contributing factors to crime.

Promoting Health & Wellness

Safe and livable communities require more than just protection from disasters and crime. Our commitment to livable communities also includes public health and wellness for all County residents. The County ensures access to preventive care, encourages healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices to prevent and manage chronic disease and offers access to a full range of health and behavioral health services to our residents who need them, including seniors and those with disabilities. The County also plays a vital role in protecting the community from infectious diseases—such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS—through ongoing surveillance, education, prevention, case management and treatment services. The County will continue to foster an environment that encourages personal, family and community responsibility for health and self-sufficiency.

Enhancing Economic Opportunity, Enrich and Protect Quality of Life

In addition to promoting the safety of local communities, San Diego County is committed to providing programs and services that protect, maintain and enhance the quality of life for County residents.

A key component of livable communities is economic opportunity. We will continue to support a diverse economy, allowing businesses and industry to provide job growth and career opportunities throughout all areas of the County. We also recognize that housing is an important component of any livable community so the County will pursue opportunities to create affordable housing and provide housing assistance to low-income individuals and families. And, since home ownership continues to play an important role in the creation of strong, stable communities, the County will continue to help residents realize their dream of home ownership.

Additionally, community infrastructure amenities such as parks, athletic fields, intergenerational community centers, recreation programs and libraries enrich the quality of life for all residents, while a variety of County programs protect the quality of life in San Diego County, such as consumer protection programs and the provision of accurate and fair public elections.

REQUIRED DISCIPLINES

If the County organization is not solvent, competent, responsive and adaptable, we cannot fulfill our obligations to the citizens we serve. In order to accomplish goals associated with any Strategic Initiative, the County must maintain a high level of operational excellence. This excellence depends upon adherence to key disciplines, which serve as enablers to the Strategic Initiatives. Required Disciplines include the following:

Discipline: **Fiscal Stability**

“Maintain fiscal stability to ensure our ability to provide services our customers rely on, in good times and in bad.”

Discussion

It is essential that the County continue to use sound management practices to ensure fiscal stability and protect taxpayers’ dollars. As a local government who relies upon State and federal revenues, it is critical that the County continually look forward to anticipate any impacts from State and federal budget deficits as they affect our ability to serve the public and carry out our strategic goals. Our management practices institutionalize ongoing monitoring and reporting of the County’s fiscal condition and provide an early warning system for appropriate action to be taken in the event of fiscal stress. Additionally, as policy changes are implemented at the State and federal levels that affect the County’s delivery of services, such as healthcare reform, ongoing monitoring and reporting is critical to ensure that the County reacts appropriately and in a timely manner to protect the taxpayer’s bottom line. Our management practices also include policies and practices that ensure structural balance between ongoing revenues and expenditures. Further, the County continues to evaluate and refresh its fiscal policies and procedures in response to changes in our funding sources and in the needs of the community we serve. Key management practices include:

Financial Reporting and Forecasting

The County produces long-term financial forecasts to anticipate changes in its primary cost drivers and to assist in making budget decisions. A quarterly financial reporting process is also in place to allow County Managers to appropriately react to changes in the external economic or internal fiscal conditions of the organization.

Structural Balance

The financial management activities of the County must support structural balance between ongoing revenues and expenditures. The use of one-time resources for the support of essential ongoing programs jeopardizes the County’s ability to continue such services and undermines the fiscal stability of the organization. Management oversight to ensure adherence to the appropriate use of one-time resources for one-time expenditures is a principle component of the annual budget and quarterly financial reporting process.

Capital Improvement Planning

The County annually conducts a thorough analysis of its infrastructure needs and uses a transparent process for prioritizing projects. A 5-Year Capital Improvement Needs Assessment (CINA) is developed and applies various criteria to requests for projects to ensure a fair and reasonable determination of project priorities in accordance with the County’s overall Strategic Initiatives. The CINA priorities drive the annual capital improvement plan.

Revenue Enhancement and Cost Savings

County departments have the ability to attain savings of County General Purpose revenues through the submission to State and federal agencies of grant applications to fund program services. In addition, the implementation of energy and cost saving projects may allow savings to be diverted to other program services.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Participate in the completion of multi-year capital and major maintenance improvement plans.
2. Use one-time money for one-time purchases to maintain structural balance and financial discipline.
3. Participate in the completion and review of annual financial forecasts.
4. Monitor and review quarterly financial results.

Discipline: Customer Satisfaction

“Ensure customers are satisfied with the services we provide, as a key indicator of our operational performance.”

Discussion

The citizens of San Diego County expect high quality service whether shopping at a local business or requesting a service delivered by a local government agency. In fact, customers served by the government should have even higher expectations from public agencies because they cannot go elsewhere for service. Providing residents of San Diego County with superior County services in terms of quality, timeliness and value is one way this County is earning the respect and support of its residents.

The County of San Diego’s customer service program, “Serving Everyone with Excellence,” inspires County employees to provide excellent customer services. Through this program, customer feedback is provided to the County through the Countywide Customer Satisfaction Survey and numerous departmental customer service surveys. We also assess the quality of service delivery internally through a mystery shopping program that targets different customer services areas each month with phone calls, emails, office visits and website reviews.

“Serving Everyone with Excellence” emphasizes five key employee behaviors that promote excellent customer service:

- Courteous
- Helpful
- Attentive
- Knowledgeable
- Prompt

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Meet the Customer Service Standards posted on the County’s intranet, which call for returning phone calls and emails within 24 hours or the next business day.
2. Focus on providing customer service training to front line staff, supervisors and managers.
3. Recognize staff for great service to customers.

4. Continue to look for ways to improve communication with customers and speed processes to improve the promptness of public services.

Discipline: **Regional Leadership**

“As a regional leader, we forge cooperative partnerships and leverage additional resources for the residents of San Diego County.”

Discussion

The County of San Diego is the only local government that represents the entire region. County government provides a wide array of services to area residents, addressing health and human services, public safety, environmental health, community services and more for residents of the region’s 18 cities and unincorporated communities. As such, the County of San Diego is in a unique position to provide leadership in the region on a wide variety of public policy issues.

Representing San Diego County’s Interests at the State and Federal Level

With the Board of Supervisors’ strong commitment to regional leadership, County staff work aggressively to make sure that the needs and interests of San Diego County residents are addressed at the State and federal level. In addition to voicing County concerns through the organization’s legislative process, County staff is encouraged, where appropriate, to participate in State or federal advisory groups or committees, as well as to play a leadership role in professional organizations that influence resources and regulations that affect County programs.

Leadership within the Region

The County of San Diego is committed to working with representatives of other local public agencies to address the many public needs that cross jurisdictional borders. By forming partnerships and combining resources, the County works to stretch the public’s dollars to maximize results as well as to produce better service for County residents.

Leading by Example

The County of San Diego is committed to continuous improvement of its own operations and strives to share its innovative programs and best practices with other public agencies. Many County of San Diego programs have been recognized for excellence by professional or community groups throughout the region, state and U.S. Staff is encouraged to share information on their department or unit’s best practices or award-winning programs with other agencies that face similar challenges, whether through professional groups, publications, conferences or other forums.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Represent the interests and needs of San Diego County residents at the State and federal level.
2. Work with local cities and public agencies to develop regional solutions to meet public needs.
3. Develop innovative programs, identify and implement best practices and share information on these topics with other public agencies.

Discipline: **Skilled, Competent and Diverse Workforce**

Develop a committed, capable and diverse workforce that turns plans and resources into achievement and success.

Discussion

The County is charged with meeting the public's service expectations on an array of functions that range from law enforcement, health and human services and community services as well as regulatory activities. To deliver these services, the County must attract and retain highly-qualified employees. To be viewed as "an employer of choice" requires sustained efforts in recruitment, training and career growth opportunities, succession planning and competitive salary and benefit packages. It is through these efforts that the framework for employee success is built enabling the County to meet performance expectations of both internal and external customers.

Attract and Retain a Skilled, Competent and Diverse Workforce

The ability to attract and retain highly qualified employees is essential to the on-going success of the organization. Development of annual recruitment plans for key positions in each Group, measurement of departments' satisfaction with employment lists, efforts to maintain a diverse workforce that reflect the communities we serve, activities to reduce turnover, the provision of a safe work place and the use of various academies to develop "bench strength" are all needed to ensure that we effectively manage and maximize the County's human resources capital.

Professional Development

The County is committed to providing employees with the tools and resources they need to continue their professional growth and development. Training opportunities help employees develop the skills needed to excel in their job and are provided through activities such as cross training, on-the-job learning, coaching, on-line learning and classroom-based instruction. Providing these resources helps employees better serve their customers, the residents of San Diego County.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Ensure staff is trained in the use of state-of-the-art information systems to enhance the management of human and financial resources.
2. Provide opportunities for departments to participate in the development of recruitment plans in order to attract candidates that meet specific operational and customer-service needs, and to create opportunities for diversity in the workplace.
3. Support employee professional growth through participation in administrative, supervisory, management and department personnel officer academies and other training opportunities.
4. Recognize and encourage outside "learning" opportunities such as serving on boards of non-profit organizations and other volunteer activities to enhance leadership development.
5. Expand skills and expertise through appropriate cross-training to ensure continuity of service to customers.

Discipline: **Essential Infrastructure**

"Provide the essential infrastructure, both physical and cyber, to ensure that the resources are in place to provide superior service delivery to our citizens."

Discussion

The County of San Diego is committed to providing County residents with quality services in a cost-effective, high-quality manner and is equally committed to being responsible stewards of the public's assets. A significant measure of this commitment is how well essential infrastructure is maintained and renewed to allow County departments to provide critical services to the public with maximum efficiency. To meet this

commitment, the County has implemented the Strategic Capital Assessment Management Program, encompassing a broad spectrum of activities that include capital planning, design, and construction, operations and maintenance and capital renewal of critical infrastructure assets. Combined, these activities provide a proactive approach to maintain the physical environment, modernize and replace aging facilities, maximize the public's return on investments. As the County makes significant investment in facility and infrastructure replacement, careful planning, monitoring and execution ensure that the public's assets are built in a cost effective and efficient manner.

The process of the Capital Improvement Needs Assessment (CINA) prioritizes new capital projects over a 5-year horizon by using a scoring system that considers strategic value among other criteria. The County has begun a systematic capital replacement and renewal program, which, over the next 5 years, will provide quality, modern facilities for the public and at the same time enhance the communities in which those facilities are located.

Equally important, an overall process of fund allocation for major maintenance projects and capital programs is in place. This process involves interaction at all levels of the County and includes department personnel (the end user), Group level personnel, the Auditor & Controller, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Group General Managers. This interaction revolves around the establishment of a formalized process for allocating funds to the Major Maintenance Program and the Capital Improvement Program through the Facility Planning Board, with approval by the Board of Supervisors.

By using a structured program, in which adequate information is disseminated and reviewed in terms of overall County needs and priorities, the County ensures that the public receives the best value for its tax dollars.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Ensure adequate funding of capital and major maintenance projects.
2. Provide timely input into the Capital Project planning process.
3. Give prompt notification of maintenance requirements via the web-based work order system.
4. Completion of maintenance to prolong the life of a County asset, such as vehicles and structures.
5. Utilize Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in the design of new construction to reduce environmental impacts and improve energy efficiency.

Discipline: **Accountability/Transparency**

“Assure accountability to ourselves and the public by requiring that County business be conducted as openly as possible, resulting in the efficient and ethical use of public funds.”

Discussion

Transparency and accountability are both essential if an organization is to be a responsible steward of the public's money and trust. Transparency – or operating the public's business as openly as possible -- means giving County residents the information they need to be aware of and participate in decisions that affect them. Accountability requires us to “account” for how we've spent the public's funds by reporting the results achieved by County services and programs. A commitment to the disciplines of transparency and accountability is essential for an organization to earn and maintain the public's trust and to meet the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct.

Conduct the Public's Business Openly

The County of San Diego is committed to operating the public's business as openly and transparently as possible. This means complying with all applicable laws regarding public meetings, public records and public notification of actions such as hearings or contracts. (Board of Supervisors Policy A54 "Public Access to County Records" and Policy A73 "Openness in County Government" speak to expectations in these areas.) The County also solicits public input on a regular basis from customers and from the many County-sponsored advisory groups that have been established by the Board of Supervisors (Board Policy A74 "Citizen Participation in County Boards, Commissions and Committees). It televises all Board of Supervisors' meetings on its government access cable television channel and posts these meetings and an increasing volume of information on its website to help citizens who cannot or do not wish to personally travel to a County facility for meetings, information or services. Conducting the public's business openly also means that we work to inform and educate residents about County services and operations. Through public awareness campaigns, media outreach, the County Television Network and other means, the County works to disseminate key information of value in the community.

Report How Public Funds Are Spent and the Results Achieved

The County of San Diego provides an accounting to the public, not only of how public monies are spent, but also on the results achieved from these expenditures. In the County's Operational Plan, which details how County funds will be spent for a two-year period, departments include information on their performance goals, how they will be measured and report previous year's results. The County also prepares a number of other public documents each year, in compliance with the County Charter, all financial reporting laws and generally-accepted accounting practices, including a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), County Treasury reports and annual County audits performed by an independent professional audit firm. Furthermore, Board Policy B44, "Audit Follow-Up," commits the County to a formal, open and timely process to ensure that all recommendations resulting from an audit are acted upon.

Uphold the Highest Ethical and Legal Standards

All County employees are held to the highest legal and ethical standards in the performance of their County duties. Board Policy A120 describes the County's zero tolerance for fraud in the conduct of County business. To ensure that employees understand what this means, the Chief Administrative Officer's Office of Internal Affairs offers training for employees that focuses on real-life workplace situations, employee and employer responsibilities and the resources available to employees. One of the key resources available to County employees is the Office of Internal Affairs which, in addition to offering training and guidance, investigates allegations of improper government activity or discrimination and protects employees who report impropriety from reprisals.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Conduct public business as openly as possible in compliance with all applicable laws.
2. Clearly report how public monies are spent and the results obtained.
3. Ensure that all employees are aware of and comply with the County's Legal and Ethical Standards.
4. Facilitate the timely completion of external and internal audits.
5. Report appropriate information to State and federal agencies as required.

Discipline: **Continuous Improvement**

"Achieve operational efficiency through continuous efforts to improve and innovate, thereby maximizing value for our taxpayers."

Discussion

The County of San Diego is committed to achieving excellence in all its operations and knows that excellence is not created simply by increasing budgets. By continuously working to improve the quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our services, we maximize value for taxpayers and increase our ability to meet emerging public needs while living within existing resources.

Business Process Reengineering

Business process reengineering is the fundamental rethinking and redesign of the processes, tools and structures used to operate a program (or business) to bring about dramatic improvements in performance. Since governments are and will continue to be challenged by increasing operational costs, increasing public needs and increasing service expectations, reengineering can be an effective tool for organizations striving to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. The County of San Diego uses business process reengineering to ensure that programs are operating as efficiently as possible, particularly when a process has not been examined for some time, when program resources are reduced or when new tools become available that could improve efficiency. BPR may also be a valuable tool to use when multiple departments or units are involved in providing a service, to ensure that resources are being used most efficiently across the enterprise.

Leverage Technology

As one of the first public agencies to partner with a private Information Technology company to provide IT services for the public, the County of San Diego is now able to leverage its investment in technology systems to streamline processes, improve customer service and increase productivity. The County's IT infrastructure is a key resource within the organization and can be used to enable and support employee teams as they look for better ways to deliver services.

Create a Workplace That Supports Continuous Improvement

Managers at the County are expected to create and maintain a workplace that supports a culture of continuous improvement. This can and does take many forms including, but not limited to, sponsorship of employee suggestion programs, creation of employee advisory committees that address workplace improvements, training courses that teach employee's skills and techniques that can be used to improve operations, and employee recognition programs that reward individuals and teams for their efforts to improve County operations.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Review business processes regularly to identify opportunities for improvement.
2. Use technology to improve operational efficiency, service and cost-effectiveness.
3. Empower and reward employees who strive to improve their program, practices, workplace or skills to further improve County operations.
4. Develop projects to improve quality control efforts or reduce error rates.

Discipline: **Information Technology**

“Optimize the use of information technology systems as a tool to organize and access data to improve operational efficiency, decision making, and service to customers.”

Discussion

Government employees and the customers we serve all face escalating data and information needs. The County is under greater pressure than ever to manage this material effectively, not only for compliance and risk reduction purposes, but also to improve operational efficiency and customer service while reducing costs.

Information management tools can be used to expand the public's access to County information and services by making them available 24 hours a day/7 days a week, at the customer's convenience, without travel to a County office. Appropriate information management also helps identify and develop cost-effective, efficient solutions that are consistent with financial, organizational, technical, and human resources needs. From project conception through system integration, employees have to find appropriate business and information management systems.

The Information Technology (IT) Guiding Principles and the IT Governance model, posted on the County's intranet, were adopted to establish rules that guide technology decision-making. The decisions that are made reflect a vision of improved ways to use technology to benefit the enterprise. This enables the business units to use the IT Guiding Principles as criteria for evaluating and choosing among alternatives and increases the consistency of IT related decision-making across the enterprise. Consistency in IT decisions enables improved IT asset management and investment; increases the productivity of the employee/customer and lowers learning curves.

Examples of How Required Disciplines are Met:

1. Invest in and fully utilize IT as a tool to improve current business processes.
2. Require completion of a business case and Return on Investment (ROI) analysis as part of IT decision making.
3. Use document management to organize and make information more accessible.
4. Adhere to IT Guiding Principles and Standards.
5. Replacement of non-automated applications and improvements in existing automated applications.
6. Provide training in data management and analysis.

✓ 2008-13 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Mission: “To provide the residents of San Diego County with superior County services in terms of quality, timeliness and value in order to improve the region’s quality of life.”

Guiding Principles:

- ❖ Provide for the safety and well-being of those San Diego communities, families, individuals and other organizations we serve.
- ❖ Preserve and enhance the environment in San Diego County.
- ❖ Ensure the County’s fiscal stability through periods of economic fluctuations and changing priorities and service demands.
- ❖ Promote a culture that values our customers, employees and partners and institutionalizes continuous improvement and innovation.

Vision: “A County government that has earned the respect and support of its residents.”

Strategic Initiatives:

KIDS	THE ENVIRONMENT	SAFE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES
<p><i>“Improve opportunities for children”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage healthy behaviors and address children’s health or safety issues to help ensure healthy adulthood. 2. Provide quality care, representation and supportive services for at-risk children to enable and encourage them to succeed. 3. Promote and support family self-sufficiency. 4. Engage youth and their families in enriching activities to help children reach their full potential. 	<p><i>“Manage resources to ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement resource conservation programs. 2. Develop and implement land use strategies to balance housing, open space preservation, parks and recreation, infrastructure and economic development needs of County residents, taxpayers and businesses. 3. Protect, sustain and restore the quality of water, air and habitat in the County. 4. Reduce environmental risk through education, outreach, regulation, intergovernmental collaboration and leveraging public and private resources. 	<p><i>“Promote safe and livable communities”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation capabilities for both natural and manmade disasters. 2. Improve the safety of our communities by providing intervention and prevention services, quality investigations, responsive law enforcement and legal representation, as well as detention and supervision services. 3. Promote the health, well being and self sufficiency of adults and seniors. 4. Develop and support services, programs and initiatives that enrich or protect our residents’ quality of life.

Required Disciplines:

To sustain operational excellence and ensure sufficient resources for the Strategic Initiatives:

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|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| ✓ Fiscal Stability | ✓ Skilled, Competent, Diverse Workforce | ✓ Accountability/Transparency |
| ✓ Customer Satisfaction | ✓ Essential Infrastructure | ✓ Continuous Improvement |
| ✓ Regional Leadership | | ✓ Information Technology |